

St Louis Post-Dispatch

Meth manufacturing is a public health threat

Monday, March 8, 2010

Regarding the editorial "Coupons for crack" (March 2): The Post-Dispatch is wrong on its stand on pseudoephedrine — dead wrong. I wonder if the editorial staff reads the articles in the paper. The editors refuse to recognize the threat to public safety that "convenient" access to PSE poses. Thank goodness that St. Louis Alderman Stephen Regali and state Rep. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, have the courage to stand up against special interests and do what needs to be done.

Making PSE prescription-only will be an inconvenience for those who chose PSE as their cold remedy of choice, but does the inconvenience outweigh the threat? Ask the 18 month-old child I call Baby Doe.

It was more convenient for her stepfather to buy PSE at the nearby drug store than risk getting busted buying meth from a drug dealer. While cooking the PSE into meth, he coated the house and its contents, including Baby Doe's crib, with meth residual. Baby Doe died from the exposure.

How inconvenient was it for the sanitation worker in Arnold who was overcome by the fumes from the lab that a cooker had thrown into the trash? How inconvenient was it for the family of five in Festus whose house burned down when the dad's meth lab blew up? How inconvenient is it for the 65 children taken from their homes in Jefferson County because their parents conveniently bought PSE and cooked it into meth?

Those who are harmed by easy access to PSE are the innocent, not the lawbreakers. Buying and selling PSE for meth manufacturing is a serious threat to public health.

As the alderman of the St. Louis and the legislators of Missouri ponder this issue, I hope they ask themselves this question: Does the inconvenience outweigh the threat? Ask Baby Doe.

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